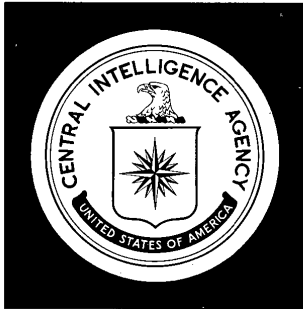




The President's Daily Brief

5 July 1972

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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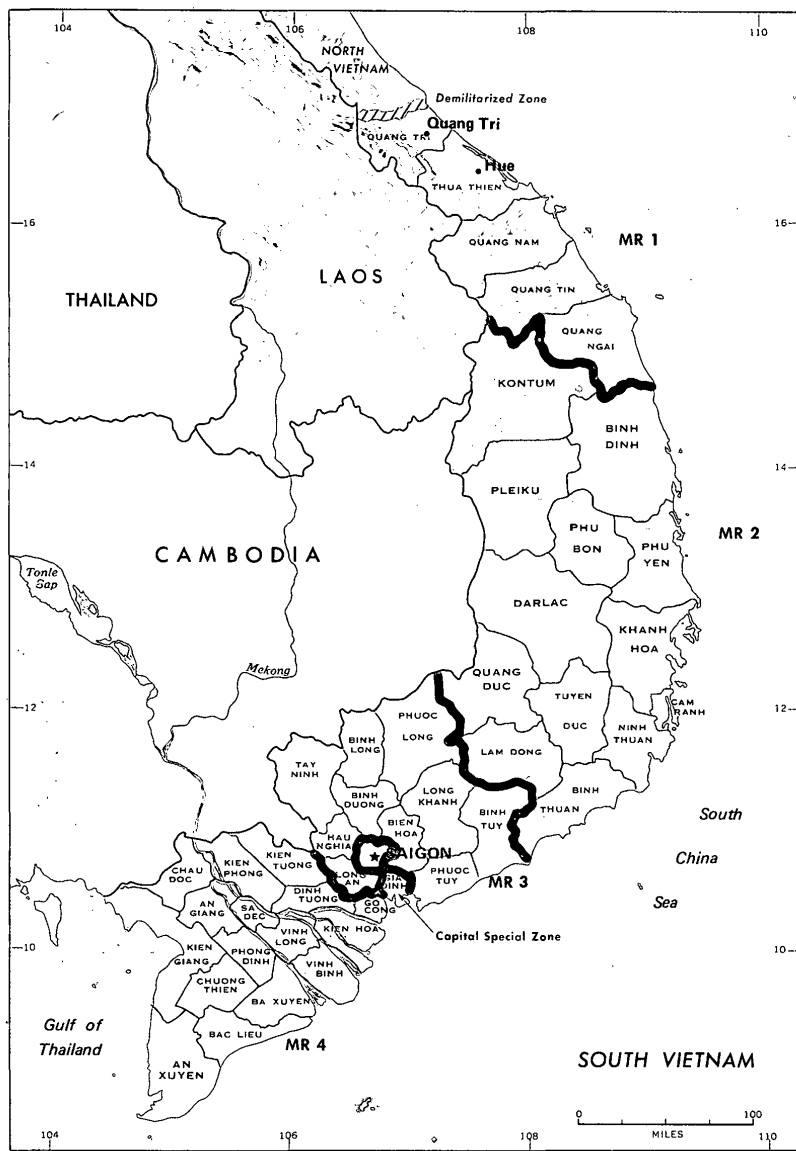
PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

South Vietnamese paratroopers are reported to be in Quang Tri City and so far have encountered only light resistance, but the Communists may be planning unusual measures to stem the offensive. The Communists are maintaining some pressure on Hue, but there is evidence they have been forced to scale down their objectives. (*Page 1*)

On *Page 2*, we analyze the announced agreement between North and South Korea.

Tanaka wins party leadership post in Japan and is scheduled to become prime minister tomorrow. (*Page 4*)

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VIETNAM

South Vietnamese paratroopers are reportedly in Quang Tri City and are encountering only light resistance. The Communists, however, are evidently resorting to unusual measures in an effort to stem the offensive. Intercepts state that North Vietnamese antiaircraft units are to use their weapons and personnel against South Vietnamese infantry and armored vehicles and that at least one company from each regiment is to be "sacrificed" in rear guard action in case the regiments are forced to retreat. One message specifically commanded that "all units, from the regimental commander on down," must hold their positions.

Despite such exhortations, one regiment reported to its headquarters that it had "failed" in the mission to defend Quang Tri City and that there was a possibility of "even more failures." Another regiment assigned to hold the city reported that one company "abandoned its weapons and ran away" under attack.

To the south, the Communists are maintaining some pressure on Hue. Enemy shelling attacks appear to have caused about one fourth of the city's residents, who had returned following the earlier fighting, to leave again.

Despite the recent flurry of attacks against Hue, there is some evidence that the Communists have been forced to scale down their objectives.

[redacted] Viet Cong cadre near Hue are now being told that there will be no significant assault against the city until October at the earliest and that the Communists will confine themselves to artillery and sapper attacks in the intervening months.

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Although things are going badly for them in the north, the Communists have increased the pressure on government positions throughout the Mekong Delta. The heaviest action has been in Kien Phong Province, where enemy ground attacks forced government territorial forces to withdraw from several support bases yesterday. Additional bases were reported to have been isolated in nearby Dinh Tuong Province, while farther south, in the An Xuyen - Chuong Thien provincial area, several positions came under heavy mortar and rocket fire.

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KOREA

The communiqué issued with the announcement of the recent secret talks between North and South Korea indicates that Seoul successfully resisted Pyongyang's efforts to move the next round of talks to a substantive political level. It focuses instead on less controversial subjects such as humanitarian, economic, and cultural relations while mentioning political unification only in general terms. The cautious South Korean leaders will be likely to insist on tangible progress on the side issues before committing themselves to substantive political discussions.

The agreement makes no mention of a summit meeting between Premier Kim Il-sung and President Pak Chong-hui--one of the goals of the North Koreans. It also failed to specify the duties, membership, and future responsibilities of the coordinating committee that has been set up. President Pak had earlier told Ambassador Habib that he did not want the committee to function on an official political level and hoped to staff it with junior officials.

The announcement will create some political difficulties for Seoul. Opposition politicians are strongly objecting to the fact that the agreement was made without prior consultation with the legislature, and they can be expected to be highly critical of the government at the current special session of the National Assembly. After twenty years of describing Pyongyang as the epitome of evil, Seoul will need to reassure conservative elements, particularly in the military, that it is exercising caution. It must also restrain popular expectations about where the talks will lead. CIA Director Yi in his press conference after the announcement sought to scotch speculation that the agreement will mean unification in the near future by stressing the need for continued vigilance.

There will also be increased pressure on Seoul to lift some of the emergency measures and anti-Communist laws directed at protecting the nation against subversion and aggression from the North. The opposition is calling for an end to the emergency situation, and Yi's remarks indicate the government may be prepared to give some ground on this score.

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The announcement will also have significant implications for the Korean question at the UN, where both sides will endeavor to use the talks to buttress their positions. In addition, Seoul's public acceptance of the principle of non-interference will be used by Pyongyang to press for accelerated US withdrawal from the peninsula.

In the tightly controlled society of North Korea, Kim will face far fewer problems in writing off two decades of hysterical propaganda directed against the South. A plenum of the party central committee, which began on 1 July, focused almost exclusively on the reunification question. In his opening report Kim almost certainly provided details on the talks and guidance on how the matter should be explained to party members and the general population and Pyongyang is giving extensive domestic coverage to the announcement.

In the international sphere, Kim hopes to derive additional prestige and diplomatic recognition from the dialogue with the South. Japanese Government officials, for example, have already indicated that the talks could have an effect on Tokyo's attitude toward North Korea.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTE

Japan: As expected, Trade Minister Tanaka was elected leader of the Liberal Democratic Party today on the second ballot. He thereby succeeds Prime Minister Sato as majority party leader and he is scheduled to be chosen formally as prime minister in a special session of the Diet tomorrow.

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